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ABSTRACT

The growing demand on English departments for language-oriented courses for prospective teachers offers increased opportunities to the departmental linguist(s). English linguists possess a special expertise in language structure and analysis that gives them a unique advantage in designing and teaching such courses. A look at the training needs of teachers at all levels illustrates the contributions linguists can make. Language and reading courses for propsective elementary teachers should treat morphology and phonology, including suprasegmentals, with special emphasis on their relation to reading and spelling skills. Training for both elementary and secondary teachers should include dialectology; it will promote a positive attitude toward dialects and enable teachers to deal more intelligently with dialect interference in the classroom. Courses for secondary and college teachers should place heavy emphasis on transformational-generative grammar and should also include discourse analysis and the study of literary language, among other subjects. If linguists are successful in taking advantage of the opportunities discussed here, they will create a demand for other courses, which, in turn, will create a demand for more linguists to teach them. (KM)

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# The Linguist and Teacher-Training

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In recent years, Education departments and colleges have increasingly turned to English departments for help in the task of teaching basic content courses in elementary and secondary teacher-training programs. Increasingly, English departments are expected to develop special courses for prospective teachers in such areas as composition, practical literary criticism, reading, children's literature, and applied linguistics. In addition, the mushrooming of programs leading to Master of Arts of Teaching degrees has created a need for teacher-oriented courses specifically designed for graduate students preparing to teach at the two-year college level. Out of these growing demands arises a phoenix of hope for the often-shunned departmental linguist: opportunities in teacher-training that may enable the linguist, not merely to survive, but to prevail.

There are several reasons for this. An important one is the reluctance of literature specialists to become involved in courses directly related to teacher-training. A second is the paucity of rhetoric specialists, resulting from the failure of the profession to encourage and to train people in this important aspect of the "English" discipline. In many English departments, as a matter of fact, the departmental token linguist has already been transformed into the departmental token rhetorician -- an all too common context-sensitive rule for survival. But a third and more positive reason is that English linguists possess a special expertise in language structure and analytical skills that gives them a unique advantage in designing and teaching courses for teacher-training. A look at the needs of programs ranging from the elementary to the college level can perhaps best illustrate the contributions to be made by linguists.

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The language research of the past twenty years in both reading and in dialectology is at last beginning to influence the teaching and the materials

of language arts in the elementary school. The studies of the 1960's on the language of children, the more recent research into the causes of reading interference, studies that have investigated comprehension difficulties of different sentence transformations and the possibilities of dialect interference --- all have begun to manifest their influence in course offerings, in-service training programs, and in the kinds of reading materials designed for classroom use. Prospective elementary teachers should not only be made aware of these studies, but they should also be taught the language-analysis skills necessary to become effective reading teachers: teachers who can diagnose as well as teach.

Language and reading courses designed for elementary teachers should include an in-depth treatment of phonology with special emphasis on such practical considerations as sound-spelling relationships and discrepancies, the difference between letters and sounds, regional dialect variations, and the influence of the phonological processes, such as assimilation, on reading and spelling skills. Prospective elementary teachers should also develop an awareness of the intonational features of the language: (1) how intonation contours of the spoken language correspond to punctuation and other conventions of the written language, and (2) how stress, pitch, and juncture are related to both syntax and meaning. This knowledge of intonation is especially important to teachers in the primary grades where initial reading instruction takes place.

Courses designed for the elementary teacher should also include aspects of morphology and, for these people, I am convinced that a structural approach is most applicable to their pedagogical needs. They particularly should develop proficiency with morphophonemic features of grammatical suffixes, such as the pronunciation variants of the plural (-S) as well as the phonological influences on the pronunciation and spelling of derivational affixes as manifested in the phonological variants of the negative prefix: in-; im-; ir-; il-.

Another area of linguistic study that can make two contributions to elementary teaching is dialectology. First, a knowledge of regional and social dialect variants in pronunciation, morphology, and syntax can aid teachers both in dealing more intelligently with dialect interference in the acquisition of reading skills and in their search for better reading materials. Second, a course in dialect that promotes in the prospective lementary teachers a sympathy and respect for the language of their charges may eventually dispel the child-stifling attitudes of teachers who believe that any speech pattern other than the standard norm is inferior, deficient, or noncommunicative. Conversance with studies such as those by William Labov could alert these teachers to the situations when dialect really interferes with reading comprehension and when students are able to translate standard written English into their own vernacular.

Dialect studies are important for prospective secondary teachers as well. They, too, should know that non-standard dialects of English are as complete and systematic as the standard ones and that non-standard dialects have more features in common with the standard than not. Secondary teachers, as well as elementary teachers, need their attitudes realigned. But secondary teachers can make more direct pedagogical use of such knowledge than elementary teachers can. Units of regional dialect study are especially attractive to junior and senior high school students; besides providing an excellent opportunity to introduce students to field work, such studies can help to stimulate an interest in language study never possible with the old-fashioned, prescriptive grammar drills.

Courses designed for both secondary and college teachers should probably place heavy emphasis on transformational-generative grammar whose main concern is with principles and results, rather than with the "tree diagrams" and the writing of P-S rules. Intelligent, innovative secondary and college composition teachers can surely find many ways to use the knowledge of sentence expansion that such a course would give them. Proficiency with the coordinating and embedding transformations, a mastery of the transformations of stylistic option and their

relative appropriateness and of what they contribute to style and meaning variation, an awareness of deep and surface structure all can be pedagogical tools for conscientious teachers to help develop improved techniques for teaching composition and literature. Certainly any course in transformational-generative grammar should give the teacher much-needed analytical skills in determining and explaining sources of ambiguity and awkward sentence structure in student writing.

Courses for both secondary and college teachers should include materials on discourse analysis and on studies of literary language. The tagmemic approach to units of discourse as presented in the writings of Pike, Becker, and Young can be especially useful to the teaching of composition. Studies of literary language such as Owen Thomas' work on metaphor and the transformational-generative treatment of style by Jacobs and Rosenbaum provide pedagogically useful approaches to literature. Even Francis Christensen's "generative" rhetoric with its close relationship to linguistic method can perhaps be best taught by a linguist.

A background in phonology and morphology is also needed by secondary and college teachers, even though the approach may differ from that used for elementary people. Teachers at more advanced levels can acquire much pedagogical mileage from a knowledge of the various word-forming processes and of the history of vocabulary change. Teachers familiar with the intonational features of the language can certainly bring an added dimension to their teaching of prosody. Even such a mundane skill as effective punctuation can be better taught by a person knowledgeable about English phonology.

Secondary and college teachers could certainly benefit from history of the English language, from knowledge of the recent studies on semantics, logic, and language acquisition ... the list goes or and on. But so far this discussion has been concerned only with courses taught and developed inside the confines of the English department. If we, as linguists, are successful in developing training courses, there will soon be a demand for in-service training programs,

many of them government funded --- a phenomenon with particular appeal to college administrators. If we are really energetic, we can develop special summer institutes for teachers seeking a retread job. In this project, we can enlist the help of those other pariahs of the English departments, the folklorist and the rhetorician, to develop package offerings of courses such as social dialectology, Black or Appalachian folklore, composition for teachers... the possibilities are almost endless.

All these teacher-training needs have been with us for many years. But now the Education specialists are beginning to realize that English linguists can help to rectify the inadequacies of traditional programs. If we, as linguists, meet this challenge, we might even win the approbation of our colleagues, the literature scholars. If we succeed well enough, the English department may be persuaded to hire another linguist, or maybe two? Thus are empires begun. Today survival; tomorrow the world?